

Independent Business, which is key voting this vote. It has also been endorsed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Hotel & Lodging Association, the International Franchise Association, the National Restaurant Association, the U.S. Travel Association, and the Independent Community Bankers of America.

The House passed this clean PPP extension last week by an overwhelming margin of 415 to 3.

With the House now in recess and the Senate leaving this week, advancing a clean extension through the Senate ensures the continuation of this vital relief for our small businesses and their employees. We simply have to get this done.

I agree with my colleagues that there are further improvements that could be made to PPP, such as addressing an issue facing certain sole proprietors. Unfortunately, the new administration changed the rules, so sole proprietors who applied early when the program reopened in January were treated differently than sole proprietors who are applying now. That obviously doesn't make sense. We should have the same rule.

I have talked with the new SBA Administrator about this problem. She agrees that it is unfair and needs to be fixed and has committed to working with all the sponsors and with the House and Senate Small Business Committee to find a solution to ensure that the program is implemented as Congress intended.

But in order to ensure that there is adequate time to develop and implement these improvements, we must first, without delay, pass H.R. 1799 to keep the PPP open for another 2 months.

I urge all of my colleagues to support cloture and passage of this important bipartisan legislation. It truly is bipartisan.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator MURRAY and I be permitted to complete our remarks prior to the vote for up to 5 minutes each.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF DAVID TURK

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, today the Senate is going to vote on the nomination of David Turk, who will be serving as Deputy Secretary of Energy. If confirmed, he is going to play a critical role in our Nation's energy agenda and in leading the Department.

His experience in energy policy is extensive. He served in leadership positions at the International Energy Agency, the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Department of State, and the National Security Council. He is an expert in the field, and his qualifications are very clear.

It is also clear from his nomination hearing that he is dedicated to all

types of American energy. This is critical if we are going to keep America an energy-dominant nation. I especially appreciated his commitment to advance nuclear and carbon capture utilization and sequestration technologies.

During his hearing, he said that there are huge opportunities on carbon capture utilization and sequestration if we can work together and really go to scale. He also emphasized the need to construct CO₂ pipelines to move the captured carbon, and I agree. Carbon capture technologies hold the key to major emission reduction while enabling America to use the tremendous natural resources with which we are blessed.

This issue has broad bipartisan support. Last Congress, I worked with Democrats, including SHELDON WHITEHOUSE and TOM CARPER, as well as Republicans, including SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, to pass the USE IT Act into law. This bipartisan law will support the development of carbon capture and direct air capture techniques.

This kind of groundbreaking research is already happening in Wyoming. The Integrated Test Center located outside of Gillette, WY, is hosting carbon capture research teams today. These research teams are looking at how we can take captured carbon emissions and transform them into marketable products like building materials, clothing, and even hand sanitizer. So I would welcome Mr. Turk and Energy Secretary Granholm to come to Gillette to see the fantastic research taking place there.

Mr. Turk was also very responsive to the committee's questions for the record. That has not been the case with every one of President Biden's nominees so far.

If he is confirmed, Mr. Turk must prioritize policies that take advantage of the enormous economic and national security benefits generated by America's oil, natural gas, and coal resources.

The Biden administration has taken a sledgehammer to the economies of Wyoming and other Western States by declaring war on these natural resources. Let me be very clear: Coal, oil and natural gas are not going away. America is going to rely on these resources for decades to come. We need to use and promote every kind of American energy and the thousands of jobs that come with them.

Coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear power, and renewables are all essential to America's energy mix. Mr. Turk demonstrated that he understood that reality during his nomination hearing. He can be sure that I will hold him to the commitments he made during his nomination hearing to expand carbon capture as well as nuclear power. I am going to continue to hold the Biden administration accountable as well.

As I did in committee, I will support Mr. Turk's nomination on the floor today.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

NOMINATION OF RACHEL LELAND LEVINE

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I rise today to strongly urge my colleagues to support the nomination of Dr. Rachel Levine. She is a highly qualified public health expert to serve as Assistant Secretary for Health.

As the highest ranking health official in Pennsylvania, she led the State's COVID-19 response by focusing on transparency and clear, science-based communication; giving daily briefings on the status of the pandemic; and advocating for the resources and support Pennsylvanians needed.

Dr. Levine has been on the frontlines of this pandemic, which is why she knows firsthand what our States and communities need from the Department of Health and Human Services. Even before this crisis, Dr. Levine established herself as a trusted voice to the people of Pennsylvania on matters of public health through her work to establish opioid prescribing guidelines and education for medical students, make lifesaving treatment for opioid overdoses widely available, combat eating disorders, increase health equity, and help the LGBTQ community get healthcare.

She was confirmed to both of her positions in the State with broad bipartisan support. She passed out of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee with support from Republican colleagues last week, and I hope she will be confirmed today in a strong bipartisan vote as well.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge what her confirmation today would represent for our country because, in addition to being a high qualified nominee, Dr. Levine is also a historic one. Upon confirmation, she will be the highest ranking openly transgender official in our government and the first one ever confirmed by the Senate.

I have always said the people in our government should reflect the people it serves, and today we will take a new, historic step toward making that a reality.

I am proud to vote for Dr. Levine and incredibly proud of the progress this confirmation will represent for our country and for transgender people all across it who are watching today. I hope all my colleagues are as well.

I would also say how glad I am that yesterday we voted to confirm Dr. Murthy as Surgeon General.

During his last tenure as Surgeon General, Dr. Murthy established himself as a trusted voice on matters of public health, helped see our Nation through the Zika outbreak, and published groundbreaking reports on the opioid epidemic and rising youth tobacco use.

I am pleased to have Dr. Murthy returning to the role of Surgeon General at this critical time.

When it comes to ending this pandemic, we have a lot of work to do and